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PLANS FOR 1945 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Transcription by J. C. Capt, Director of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce.
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ANNOUNCER: (LIVE)

One of the most important chores the farmers of American will be called upon to undertake during the next few months has nothing to do with the actual work of plowing, planting, or harvesting, but it has plenty to do with the results of these farm tasks. This important chore is answering questions...answering questions of the Census Taker, just as has been done at regular intervals by American farmers ever since the first Census of Agriculture was taken in 1840, more than 100 years ago. With us today is Mr. J. C. Capt, Director of the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce. He will tell you briefly by transcription why your cooperation is needed in the 1945 census of Agriculture. Mr. Capt.

TRANSCRIPTION:

CAPT:

Beginning early in January and continuing for some five or six weeks, the Bureau of the Census will be taking the Nation's fourteenth Census of Agriculture. That means that sometime during that period, a census enumerator will come to your farm to register you, your acres, your crops and livestock....to see that you take your proper place in the great measure of America's agricultural resources.

The Census of Agriculture is taken every five years. The first one was taken over a century ago, in 1840. Certainly none has ever been more important than this one, covering the 1944 crop year. It is the first to be taken during a period of peak war production and its results will point the way toward helping the farmers plan their production for the coming peace. The accuracy of this census is vitally important to the United States and to you, individually. And no one can make it accurate except you -- the farmers.

We can ask all the questions in the books but you are the ones with the answers. That's the main thing I want to talk to you about -- giving us the right answers, complete and accurate. The figures compiled by the Census of Agriculture give your government, and private industry, too, the basic data for all agricultural planning, and assistance that you need.

For instance, the Federal Land Banks, Production Credit Associations, and private banking institutions that help you out in time of financial need use these figures to guide them. The Congress needs this information in order that it can properly pass on laws affecting the farmer.

Railroads can judge from production figures how to distribute freight cars for moving farm produce. Manufacturers look at Census reports on acres in cultivation and numbers of tractors on farms and have a better idea of how many new ones to make -- when they can make all that are needed again. These figures -- because they are facts -- restrain the issuance of wilfully biased or false crops reports and reduce speculation.

All of these things are important to you, but perhaps they seem a little far away, a little indirect. Well, let's get right down into the soil of your farm, and watch the census figures work. How? Let's say you have a few acres you want to put into a money crop. What shall it be? More vegetables? Well, vegetables may not be a money crop if everyone else in the county's growing them too. You know what your neighbor up the road grows and a few others close around, but on the other side of the county or the State or the country, you're not so sure. Yet they'll all be taking produce in to the same market. You go to your county agent to get his advice. He tells you the acreage in lettuce, carrots and other vegetables is pretty high in this and other counties. "But", he says, "there's need for more flaxseed or more sugar beets. That field of yours is good for flaxseed, and the local market's good to...." So you thank him and you grow flaxseed. How did your county agent know all this? Census of Agriculture figures! Pretty direct help, isn't it?

You have more than a month now before the Census Taker will come to your door. Use some of that time, will you please, to check over your records, bring them up to date -- acreage, production, crops, number of livestock. Maybe you've been a good bookkeeper as well as a good farmer and are all ready for us even now. Fine! But maybe -- and very understandably in this busy, short-labor year -- you've had little time for paper work about your eggs and milk and tomatoes and wheat or corn or peanuts or tobacco. Well, you have all that information in your head anyhow, so think back and recollect -- how much of this, how much of that. Look up receipts and bills and make notes now to have for our Census man when he comes. If you're ready for him, it will save you a lot of time and the Census will move faster. That means the government and you will get a better agricultural summing up at less cost.

What questions are we going to ask? Plenty -- but all necessary. We want to know the size of your farm -- whether you own it or rent it. How many dwellings on it -- and whether or not they have electricity, running water, radio, telephone. The size of your family living with you -- how many of them help work the farm. Do you hire additional workers? Did you yourself do work for profit off your farm anytime during the year? How is your acreage divided -- crops, grazing pasture, woodland? Is any of it irrigated land? Is there a mortgage on your farm? -- How much?

By the way, this seems a good moment to assure you that every answer you give us will be kept absolutely confidential. No one except a Census Bureau employee who is sworn to secrecy, will ever see your reports. No government agency can use any of the Census information for purposes of taxation, regulation or investigation. When the facts and figures come into the Census Bureau for tabulation they stop being John Jones' farm and Henry Smith's plantation, and become "a farm" and "a plantation" and "so many acres" in the vast statistical picture of farming in America.

Now returning briefly to the questions. We'll ask the acreage and production in bushels, gallons, and so forth of the principal crops in your locality. We will ask the numbers of your livestock and the quantities of livestock products -- milk, butter, wool, eggs, and so on. We want to know the acreage of crops which failed.. The numbers of your fruit trees and grape vines. We will ask the dollar value of all farm products sold or traded and the dollar value also of all farm products used by your own homestead on the farm. You should use local market prices to figure out that home use value.

This is a tremendous job -- this Census -- about 26,000 Census enumerators will call on over six million farmers! The questions are our part -- the answers yours. Let's be good and cooperative partners so that we can become even better partners in the future.

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